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Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food and Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Room 1061
Rockville, Maryland 20852

0222 '90 MAY 14 P2:22

Re: Docket No. 98N-1038, Irradiation in the Production, Processing, and Handling of Food

To whom it may concern:

I support the recommendation by the Center for Science in the Public Interest regarding labeling of irradiated foods:

"any foods, or any foods containing ingredients that have been treated by irradiation, should be labeled with a written statement on the principal display panel indicating such treatment. The statement should be easy to read and placed in close proximity to the name of the food and accompanied by the international radura symbol. If the food is unpackaged, this information should be clearly displayed on a poster in plain view and adjacent to where the product is displayed for sale."

Like other labels, irradiation labels are required by the FDA to be truthful and not misleading. I believe that the terms "treated with radiation" or "treated by irradiation" should be retained. Any phrase involving the word "pasteurization" is misleading because pasteurization is an entirely different process of rapid heating and cooling.

The requirement for irradiation disclosure (both label and radura) should not expire at any time in the future. Even if some consumers become familiar with the radura, new consumers (e.g., young people, immigrants) will not know what it means. The symbol should continue to be clearly explained at the point of purchase for everyone.

If there is no label, consumers will be misled into believing the food has not been irradiated. While this is clearly advantageous for the food processor, it is not for the consumer, whose safety the FDA is mandated to protect.

Please be aware that FDA credibility as regards the safety of irradiated food is quite low. Many people are aware that FDA research is often influenced by the businesses the agency is supposed to regulate. This is not an issue where the public will "take your word for it". We demand labeling that allows us to make our own decisions. The fact that the FDA considers irradiated foods to be safe does not alter the public's right to know and choose for themselves. If the FDA is representing the consumer and not the industry, this is quite obvious. If the FDA rules against consumer information, it will be very obvious whose interests the FDA truly represents. Think about what your credibility is worth when you make this decision. It is on the line.

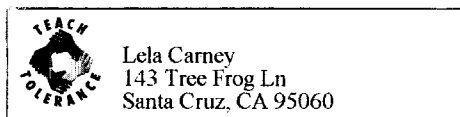
I urge you to extend the comment period past its current end date of May 18 to allow more concerned citizens the time to write in about this issue. Also, please place the comments received on the Internet so that the public can be informed about who is participating in this comment process. We would especially like to know who funds the research of the experts.

Sincerely,

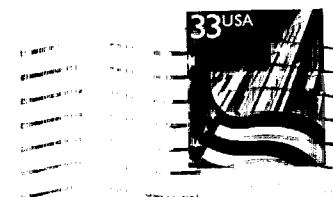
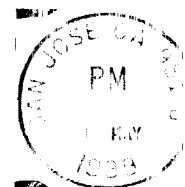
98N-1038

cc Senators Breaud & Feinstein
Rep. Fann

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